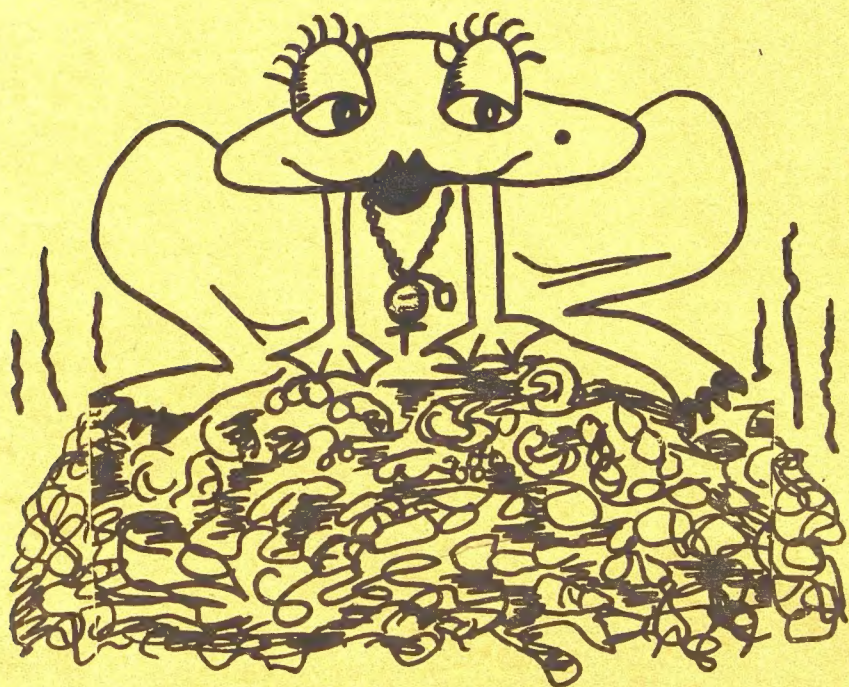


Academic Feminists



and the Women's movement

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ACADEMIC FEMINISTS AND THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

For the rest, Heinzen has adopted 'centralization' from us in place of his 'federative republic,' etc. When the views which we are now spreading about the classes become platitudes and part of the equipment of the 'individual with common sense', then that rogue will announce them with a lot of noise as the latest product of 'his own penetration' and start barking against our developing the point further. So by 'his own penetration' he yelped against the Hegelian philosophy as long as it was progressive. Now he is helping himself to the stale crumbs of it which have been spewed out undigested by Ruge.

Letter to J. Weydemeyer from
K. Marx, March 5, 1852

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Dair L. Gillespie
Elinor Lerner Ratner

April, 1973

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Our thanks to Judy "Tenspeed" Gaffin, Carol "Boss" Hatch, Rosemarie "Make-'Em'Pay" King, Maria "Muscle" Mendes, "Stompin" Stacy Olier, and Margaret "Ace" Polatnick - who, when asked for comments on this paper, persistently insisted on criticizing substance, when what we really wanted were gentle suggestions on grammatical form.

PREFACE

This is not a sisterly essay. We believe the women's movement is in danger of co-optation from the right, from small groups of women whose institutional affiliations give them disproportionate power within it. We believe academic women constitute one such group. We believe something must be done. Unfortunately, we don't know what. We console ourselves with the hope that if enough movement women become concerned, someone will think of a solution.

In the meantime, we do know that the problem is serious, and that calls for unity are not the answer. We expect to be called alarmist, divisive, and intolerant. Consequently, before we analyze the specific issue of academic feminists and the women's movement, we want to state some assumptions about the development of political movements, and the role slogans like "unity" and "tolerance" play in that development.

MOVEMENTS

Members of a nascent political movement attack only external targets. Internally, despite differences--on intellectual, behavioral, and organizational questions--they mainly tolerate each other. Eventually, however, internal and external necessities force the new movement to discard its laissez-faire policy. Even internal issues become matters of political conflict.

Take ideational matters, for instance. A new movement needs information and concepts desperately; it accepts anything members devise. Ignored rather than opposed, it initially attacks prevailing ideologies rather than institutions. Without resources and a mass base, it can use for weapons only ideas. But facts and perspectives are hard to come by. "Our history has been stolen from us," reads an early Women's Liberation poem: a common protest among fledgling movements. Members search everywhere for information which may articulate their situation. They explore forgotten areas; they peruse obscure treatises; they apply well-known theories in novel ways. With old assumptions in question, each member moves freely in any intellectual direction she chooses; all ideas are welcome, and all are important.

This tolerance no longer works once large-scale recruitment begins and opponents mobilize. Seeking support for their views, members notice that incompatible perspectives exist within the movement. Fighting external opponents, they come to see a connection between tactics, strategy, and theory; seemingly trivial questions in any one of these areas may reflect and affect one's stand on the other two. For a movement at this stage, every internal ideational dispute is important. Myriad factions develop, propose new ideas, criticize those of other factions, in the process delineating their own and their antagonists' politics. From this point on, it is clear that one develops a new idea in practical and theoretical opposition to internal as well as external views; one refines old ideas for the same reason. As conflict replaces tolerance, the overarching tendency is constantly to clarify the political underpinnings--the political assumptions and implications--of all ideas.

Factions do not, however, confine themselves to quarrels over philosophy. People begin linking particular politics with their advocates' life circumstances. Factions trace particular stands to lifestyles, external political affiliations, and placement in the larger social structure. A group may advocate certain politics to include a disenfranchised sector of the target population, for instance; or it may oppose other politics because they reflect strong external affiliations and susceptibility to co-optation. Either way, behavioral and situational differences quickly become matters of conflict on their own. So movement people scrutinize the hitherto sacrosanct private world of daily life. They learn that behavior too is political. This means they are accountable to the movement for everything; they must be prepared to justify their actions as well as their ideas.

Finally, as a fledgling movement widens its base, its own structure becomes problematic for it. It needs spokespeople, for instance; how should they be chosen? It obtains resources; how should they be distributed, and what should the decision-making process be? And it acquires advocates in high places; what should it require of them? At the start it is necessarily pluralist on organizational questions, allowing everyone to do as she pleases in the movement's name. For one thing, it lacks power to institute formal controls over members. Furthermore, the probability of individual aggrandizement is low enough, the nature of members' commitment sufficiently clear, so that the movement can rely simply on recruits' good faith. But once it attracts adherents with unequal external resources and different personal commitments, a laissez-faire approach to internal workings no longer serves. For in the absence of formal, effective anti-elitist policies and structures, those members who command most power outside tend to take over the movement. Too, enlisting in the movement may no longer mean subordinating one's private ease to movement needs, but may instead involve individual profiteering by means of the movement. The movement begins to have problems with elites and opportunists. And as the movement expands, the position of elites enables them to profit personally from their influence, while opportunists cash in on rewards to win prominence

within it. Eventually elitism and opportunism appear almost indistinguishable, each reinforcing the other. If unchecked at this stage, movement leaders become practically invulnerable to internal attacks; the movement's stratification system hardens; and the rank-and-file loses control over its own movement.

Applied to ideational matters, slogans like "unity" and "tolerance" discourage the refinement of political beliefs; applied to behavioral matters, they prevent individual accountability to the movement. But their effect on organizational issues is worst. To advocate that 'everyone do her own thing', that 'we all respect each other's trips', is to exempt the problems of opportunism and elitism from the movement's ken. For if one's trip happens to be amassing fame and fortune with the movement's name, how can the tolerant gainsay her? Further, if members must stick together no matter what, they will end up united under the direction of leaders they cannot control.

In a political movement, once elitism and opportunism develop, demands for unity and tolerance legitimate the status quo and discourage rank-and-file dissidence. It will be our thesis in this essay that elitism and opportunism have developed in the women's movement. We do not suggest they be dealt with in a sisterly way.

THE COMPANY THEY KEEP

Because the authors are academic women, we have been in an opportune position to observe the changing relationship between academic feminists and the women's movement. Therefore, we shall focus upon academic feminists. However, we do not believe their behavior is unique. In the first place, our description of academic feminists applies to other groups with advantageous institutional connections--e.g., media women, entertainers, non-academic professionals, Democratic and Republican party regulars, union leaders, etc. It also applies, though less strongly, to women with Left connections--e.g., Socialist Workers Party and New American Movement members. In all these cases, the

women involved mainly remain subordinate and responsible to male hegemony. But once they enter the women's movement, their institutional or social connections give them greater access to politically useful resources than non-affiliated movement women have. For our argument, that's all that matters.

In the second place, our description of the women's movement applies to other political movements. They too are plagued by pressures from without. We choose to discuss the case of academic feminists and Women's Liberation because we know it best. But by carefully examining this particular case, we hope to begin exposing some of the general processes by which institutional forces affect a movement's structure and ideology.

VIGNETTES OF ACADEMIC WOMEN

Four years ago, one of the authors gave a pro-Women's Liberation speech at a professional meeting. Afterwards, a senior woman in the field pulled her aside and warned her, "If you keep talking like that, you'll ruin your career chances." That woman is now a leader in the profession's feminist group.

Four years ago, a student in the same profession publicly disavowed her department's Women's Liberation caucus. She did not believe women were discriminated against. In 1972 she accepted a university appointment to teach a sex-roles course.

Four years ago, few academic women gave credence to accusation of sexism in the university. ('I've never experienced discrimination. If a woman's competent enough, she'll have no problems. Screaming "sexism" is just a way to avoid placing the blame where it belongs: on women's own ineptitude.') Today academic women appear on T.V. and radio shows claiming to represent the women's movement in its fight against sexism everywhere.

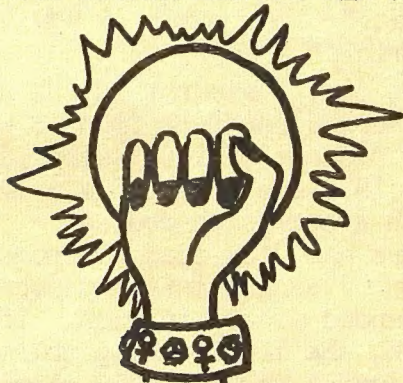
Four years ago, to support women's cause was prima facie evidence of Women's Liberation membership. And Women's Liberation members, academics agreed, were irresponsible, immature, anti-intellectual, dogmatic, homely zealots. Consequently, four years ago, there was no safe way to discuss the Woman Problem without risking professional opprobrium. And four years ago,

few female academics belonged to the women's movement. Unlike other women, academics hadn't the justification of ignorance. They had heard of Women's Liberation. They opposed it.

Things have changed in academe. Female social scientists, for instance, are now concerned with the question of women. Most claim to favor Women's Liberation. Many call their work "feminist." Some consider themselves, and are considered by their colleagues, to be leaders in the fight for feminism. Nor is this sudden devotion confined to social scientists. Everyone's on the side of the angels lately; besides, the pay is good.

But what are our academic heroines up to nowadays? Have these once unsympathetic ladies really grown? Are they currently contributing to the cause? Does one swallow make a summer? And what about Naomi?

ACADEMIC WOMEN IN THE MOVEMENT: OR,
BOY, YOU OUGHTA LOOK AT HER NOW



Her professional affiliations give an academic woman certain advantages over most women. When she embraces feminism, she commands politically useful resources unavailable to "lay" feminists.*

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* Once the term "feminist" denoted members of a specific faction within Women's Liberation. To academics, however, it merely means "people who are pro-woman." Since they use the word this way, so shall we -- under protest.

For one thing, the universities directly provide her with goodies. Her classes contain captive audiences of undergraduates, often pressured into her pet research projects in the name of the movement, intellectual endeavor, or course requirements. The universities also supply her with a national network of contacts; institutional sources of money for travel, mailing, and phoning; books and duplication services; and a labor pool to do the work she considers beneath her. (After all, ' I didn't go to graduate school to do my own typing.')

An academic's institutional affiliations also afford greater access to media than lay feminists have. Professional journals print her studies. From there, her work may be picked up and disseminated by secondary media sources. Few outlets exist for non-academic papers (a fact especially striking when we consider the proportion of women each camp contains). Further, professionals can publish in both academic and movement journals; non-academics, only in the latter. Academic women also have access to the mass media proper (TV, radio, and newspaper coverage) via their institutional connections. Their views are solicited, their speeches noted, and their activities reported.

These university-based resources give academic feminists a disproportionate share in defining the movement. They exert undue influence on both ideological and structural matters.

First, academic feminists control certain communication channels between the movement and the target population. Their decisions on who gets to use which channels, and what sort of message is conveyed, affect the movement. For instance, they often receive requests for speakers. Matching audiences with "compatible" spokespeople, they determine which views are disseminated to which groups. ("I'll address the State House rally; I'm good at that. You talk to the Thursday night Great Books Club.") When special journal issues solicit their editorial advice, they divvy up work assignments the same way. Further, in their classes on women, they influence their students' views of the movement through their lectures, choice of required reading, and selection of guest speakers.

University funds help too. For example, conferences provide occasions for interaction both among

movement members and between the movement and the target population. Since academic institutions frequently subsidize conferences, university feminists influence the movement by establishing conference topics and format. Further, these same institutions pay honorariums to selected "lay" feminist speakers, so academics carry great weight in deciding which non-academics become movement spokeswomen.

Finally, with their media contacts and their credentials of expertise, academic feminists have a better crack at the target population than the "civilian" movement does. So they can legitimize their pre-eminence to the movement, by claiming special privileged communication with the masses. ('I talk with lots of people all over the country, and I know what reaches them.') They get away with this claim precisely because it's false. The communication flows only one way: they address the People, but the People have neither organizations, nor media, for formal means to reply. How can Jane Doe, average Person, answer a newspaper series, radio marathon, or TV guest appearance? Academic feminists talk to, not with, the People. But their monopoly of communication channels makes it difficult for the movement to doubt, much less publicly dispute, their claim to represent the People.

Feminism's new members have a lot of weight to swing around.



WHO PAYS THE PIPER...

Academic feminists exercise great influence over the "civilian" movement. But there exists no semblance of a checks-and-balances system between the two groups. The movement did not elect academics to lead it; there was never a plebiscite; and there is no recall mechanism. Rather, their institutional affiliations give academics pre-eminence. So they must answer to only one constituency: their (mostly male, mostly hostile) colleagues.

Sometimes academic feminists do owe their jobs partly to movement ferment or women's caucuses' pressure. But the fact remains that the movement can neither reward nor punish them materially, once they are ensconced in their positions. It simply lacks the material wherewithal. And wielding what clout it has is difficult, since its loose structure hampers cohesive action. The professions, on the other hand, enjoy both ample resources and the tight organization to use them deliberately. Consequently the movement cannot exert the leverage the professions can over academic feminists generally. The only realm in which it outweighs the professions is the moral realm; the only pressure point it can touch is individual conscience. And normally, alas, ethical judgements don't sway people who are padded by good salaries, lucrative grants, and the knowledge that their job futures depend more on their colleagues' good graces than on the movement's opinion. After all, academics get their credentials of expertise, their reputations, their jobs, and their security from their colleagues, not from the rag-tag movement. An academic woman may submit herself, voluntarily and individually, to the moral sanctions which constitute the movement's control over her. But academic women are formally and collectively responsible solely to the institutions which underwrite them: the universities.

Academic feminists of course say the movement's esteem means everything to them. They know their souls are pure. But we speak here of objective situations, not self-definitions. Saints may subsume material urgings under moral imperatives. Those of us as yet uncannitized cannot be relied upon to do so unless a movement exists strong enough to force the decision. In the

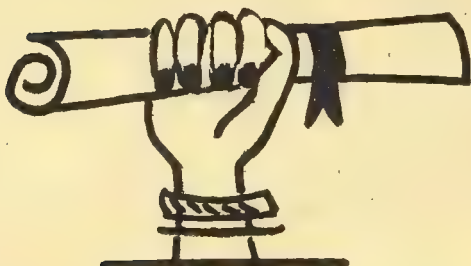
case of academic women, however, the movement lacks such strength; in fact, as we argued earlier, academics give more influence than they receive. And regardless of where an academic woman thinks her loyalty belongs, the important point is not whether she's deceiving herself. The point is, the movement can't count on anything.

For whoever takes money from one side and morals from another faces a potential conflict of interest. Where the material stakes are high enough, and the possibility of moral retaliation low, there are always pressures for betrayal.* An academic feminist can tone down her side of things, drop the subject, change positions, or play herself off as the voice of moderation in contrast with movement extremism. ('If you think what I'm saying is weird, you should listen to the screaming fanatics in the streets!') To maintain movement esteem, she can use the "later-for-you" ploy. 'I promise to start fighting as soon as my position gets a little more secure.' (After the Ph.D., after tenure, after the revolution.) 'I can't join your child-in for free campus daycare right now -- they'll cancel my grant on role-models in early education.' And then there are the "I gave at the office" lines: 'Last year I signed your petition to the City Council, so get off my back.' Or, 'I'm too busy with the H.E.W. suit.'

Since academic feminists are formally responsible only to the universities, they are structurally free to sell out the movement.

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* We are not saying academic feminists always sell out. Our point is that the structural pressures on academics do discourage anything else. Where exceptions occur, structural variables rather than superb souls must be used to explain them. Similarly, whoever wishes to avoid this problem, the others we discuss, and the ones we don't -- cannot depend for protection exclusively on her lovely motives. Ladies, dear ladies, you can't will yourselves immune. The road to reaction is paved with good intentions.

...AND TRAINS THE PIPER...



For structural reasons, academic women disproportionately influence the movement; formally they are responsible only to their colleagues. Now a woman doesn't just wake up one day with power in her pockets and a contract in her hands. Especially for a woman, joining a profession involves a lengthy, taxing apprenticeship. This affects her commitments.

First of all, an apprentice is always under the gun. She is a token woman in a hostile setting, always on call to prove herself. Too, academic supervisors tend to mistake deference for professional aptitude, professional aptitude for brains, and brains for souls. Evaluating the first, they manage to judge the last. So to the apprentice it seems that her personality, her intellect, her very worth are under constant surveillance. With such things at issue, she feels she cannot afford to relax. Unsuppressed desires for naps indicate basic depravity. She is always accountable for the way she spends her time. And Goddess help her if she fritters away her hours in non-academic pursuits, e.g., political movements.

Second, an apprentice has trouble learning the ropes, since the most important job requirements are informal. Theoretically she is a free agent who exerts herself not because her grade depends upon a certain mode of endeavor, but because her soul requires the stimulation her efforts supply. She needs the vistas opened to her by mastering the (sexist) literature on mating behavior. As production norms are informal, she learns to second-guess her superiors, and to toe the line without being told. She internalizes their norms

--many of them sexist--or she doesn't make it.

Finally, joining a profession takes many years. The longer she's been an apprentice, the higher a woman's investment; naturally she wants a return on it. And the stakes are high. A university appointment is one of the more lucrative and pleasant jobs open to women. The apprentice need only leave her carrel to see how far she might fall. Failure at a late date can mean she loses everything; a lot of goodies ride on success. So she is leery to jeopardize her operator's license.

But in order to get and keep her credentials, she must secure her superiors' esteem. Psychologically and materially her position depends upon following the informal norms they set. An academic woman does not lightly risk offending her colleagues.



...CALLS THE TUNE

Their access to institutional resources, combined with the formal and informal pressures on them to keep their colleagues' approval, makes academic feminists cautious and conservative. They hesitate to board any train which they don't yet know carries gravy, or at least offers a safe ride. This affects the way they discuss the Woman Problem.

Though they are credentialled thinkers, academic feminists rarely research new topics or develop new ideas on the gender problem. Rather, they trail in the movement's wake: they examine issues which some faction has already introduced, explored, and substantiated. Watching the faction defend its case and attract support, they have time to guess how their

colleagues and the press might react if they themselves mentioned the problem. Only when it becomes clear that the faction's stand is viable, do academics adopt the issue (without acknowledging movement inspiration, naturally).*

And their participation adds precious little to the discussion. Mainly academics claim ground a faction has already secured. For instance, the movement's civilian branches started talking about rape over two years ago. Academic feminists objected then, on grounds that the topic was flamboyant and would alienate people. Thanks to the movement's tenacity, though, it is now pretty obvious that rape is a serious problem, better explained as applied sexism than as a weird deviation by deranged criminals or repressed nymphomaniacs who 'ask for it.' And now it seems a veritable epidemic has struck academic women: everyone's studying rape. As if the movement discussion never occurred, however, these studies invariably begin at the ABC's. How many rapes really take place? Who rapes whom where? Are rapists normal? What constitutes a psychological profile of rape victims?--in other words, is rape a serious problem? And need we attribute it to deranged criminals or repressed nymphomaniacs?

Hackneyed questions like these are guaranteed to produce no new insights. Academics say they supplant unsubstantiated movement rhetoric with correct, compelling analyses. But we defy anyone to discern in a random selection of academic feminists' work--say on sexuality, since the rape literature hasn't been published yet--more intellectual merit than movement essays of several years ago exhibited.

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* In fact, academics seem to expect movement gratitude for finally climbing on board. Thus they occasionally use movement publications to solicit volunteer subjects for their research projects. Evidently they believe their unpaid subjects receive the vicarious recompense of knowing they helped Dr. So-and-So get her fourth book published. Sisterhood is its own reward--for the sisters on the bottom.

Not that academics merely plagiarize movement writings; they don't. It might be better if they did. For in order to make an analysis academically respectable, they tear the guts out of it. Take socialization, for instance. The thesis that cultures train women to shuffle is now popular among academics. Originally the movement linked sexism and socialization to illustrate three simple points. First, male dominance is socially, not biologically, caused. Second, it affects all areas of life, even infancy. Third, its eradication requires a major social overhaul, not minor reforms of single institutions. That was the context in which the movement began discussing socialization.

Academic feminists, however, attempt merely to demonstrate sexist socialization occurs. So they produce swarms of content analyses on "The Negative Image of Women in..." Daytime TV soap-operas frequently depict women in subservient roles (p.05) So do academic texts (p. 01). So do children's games (p.05). Yes, socialization indeed denigrates women (p.02). Period. Indoctrination, once considered a symptom, has now become the disease. This socialization-as-primum mobile thesis leads not to the indictment of institutions or male domination, but merely to platitudinous calls for changing the image of women. And few, nowadays, oppose that.

The marriage issue also exemplifies academics' bowdlerizing tendencies. For a long time, academic feminists publicly disputed movement theories that connected sexism and marriage. Conjugal matters, according to academics, were not suitable topics for discussion among polite feminists. Job discrimination, yes; hubby, no. But the movement itself has advanced beyond the early theories. Currently factions debate the way marriage structurally affects women, and the nature of this relationship to other institutions. And now academic feminists at last acknowledge a connection between marriage and sexism.* But their dis-

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*Another about-face is worth mentioning here. Where once academic feminists avoided the area of marriage and the family as a traditional "woman's field", today they are overrunning it.

cussions focus on the possibilities of personally liberated (heterosexual) relationships, marital contracts, and househusbands. Thus they water down the issue. It becomes a question of individual solutions, not structural analyses.

Given academic feminists' cannibalistic propensities, one might think they would swoon in ecstasy every time the movement opened another can of worms. They don't. Whenever some faction raises a new issue, they object. "You don't have enough evidence to support that. Take a course in methodology, see what Toynbee has to say. Synthesize Rousseau's, Freud's, Woolf's, and Benedict's comments on gender. Any woman can." Or, more succinctly, "This time you've gone too far." These admonitions are not politically neutral, since in lieu of proper proof, "until more conclusive data appears", and unless the faction wins, academics accept the official version of events. Rather than uphold movement assumptions and define the parameters of its issues, they move in only when it has secured an area, and tidy things up beyond recognition.

Academics maintain their tardiness and fastidiousness help movement theory. They claim to replace its subjective political bias with objectivity and facts. They're wrong, of course: as we argued earlier, once a movement exists, all movement-related stands are political. What academics do, without saying so, is change the politics of the issue. And the results conform more closely to status quo politics. Thus abortion, which academic feminists once found too hot to handle, is now supported as a means of population control: a less blasphemous defense than the movement's demand that women control their own bodies.

For not all brands of politics equally displease the university powers-that-be. It is the relative lack or diminution of controversy which marks a position as apolitical (and thus acceptable) to academic women. Four years ago, for instance, academic feminists opposed the idea of hiring women qua women. 'Quotas? My God! How political! They would ruin everything the university represents! Hiring should be based on individual competence.' But now that even H.E.W. suggests a quota system, academic feminists militantly insist a certain proportion of jobs go to women. Fierce. These days academic feminists are

distressed by the academically unpopular suggestion that an applicant's resume include her/his views on the woman question. 'Establish political employment criteria? We can't back that.' Similarly, academic women once objected to movement use of the word "oppression". They found it rhetorical, and preferred "discrimination". But now that the term "oppression" has become commonplace even in the universities, academic women use it all the time. Thus what they consider apolitical (and defensible) varies with the state of consensus among their peers.

Academic feminists select issues which no longer agitate the movement. They water down the terms, change the politics, and avoid controversy. Given the movement's current needs, these choices make their work on women almost useless. This problem doesn't bother them unduly; they don't aim for a movement hearing.* Rather, they address an unfriendly profes-

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* Nor, as we argued earlier, is it communication with the People they crave. They frequently claim that is their goal. But they have no evidence to assume, as they always do, that the People will be alienated by any version of feminism but theirs. After all, someone buys all that Women's Liberation literature: we joined the movement. It says enough to enough people to have become a national issue. Somebody out there does care. Why assume the masses are unsympathetic? Or that we must approach them with pablum and apologies?

Academic feminists' fears of alienating people do however have a certain basis. While in principle academics' audience includes the cohort of nice people everywhere, in fact it mainly comprises professional colleagues. This audience is demonstrably unsympathetic. But academic feminists consistently maintain that the hostility results from faulty communication rather than incompatible interests. Those men simply don't know all the facts or understand yet. Proceeding calmly and politely, feminism can reach them, enlighten them, and enlist their aid--provided some fanatic movement faction doesn't spook them with a hard line.

sional audience. The time lag, the bowdlerization, the altered but unannounced politics, the search for consensus can all be traced to the necessity of academic feminists' defending their work before their colleagues; their main "target population". And their colleagues are a hostile if ignorant lot. The optimal response to an antagonistic, uninformed audience is, "That's a stupid position and I won't waste my time discussing it," or "You don't know what you're saying, asshole. Go do your homework and then we'll talk." But academic women have to take collegial objections seriously, which means they have to defend themselves on their attackers' terms. Hence the mushing around.

With respect to the movement, however, academics remain powerful. Because their views receive publicity, their caution and conservatism retard it. It must try to recoup the target population, answering spurious academic-inspired objections to old theses, rather than developing their complexity. Simultaneously, factions must defend new ideas against the academic dislike for innovation. And meanwhile, publicly accusing "lay" feminists of damaging the cause with emotional excesses, academics have the resources to define themselves as the real movement.

Academics can easily pass off their platitudinous studies as the only movement theorizing. Now, people need conceptual tools to understand their situation; they need some information on a movement to evaluate it. If academic feminists supply most of the tools and information to the movement's target population, that population won't necessarily accept academic views. No matter how tightly a milquetoast group controls media access, it can't brainwash all of the people all of the time. But its effect is to discourage the development of a base for more thoroughgoing protest.

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Thus, in using their movement influence to push a soft line, academic feminists even have the power to tell the movement what its target population should be: male academics and their ilk.

PARTICULARIZING THE GENERAL, OR, TOOTING ONE'S OWN HORN

Academic feminists are better placed than other women to delineate movement issues and solutions. They also have the resources to set up action organizations. Consequently, they can channel the energies of many people who seek ways to implement their desire for change.

But academics tend to equate gender advancement with self-aggrandizement. They particularize general movement programs into planks which specifically benefit them. These particular demands are then peddled as if they were the original general platform. The movement calls for more information on women. Using this principle, academic women publish "new" anthologies (containing many articles which have been around for years) and pocket the profits; they also push women's studies programs staffed by professionals (a most useful particularization, given the tight academic job market). The movement attacks sexism on the job. So academic women publicly protest that university secretaries don't respect them enough.

The ease with which such translations are made is striking, since often what would benefit academic women would harm others. For example, academics push the Equal Rights Amendment in the name of Women's Liberation, despite the likelihood that the ERA will destroy protective legislation. Protective legislation, with all its flaws, does protect women's working conditions a bit. Extending it to men would protect women's conditions more. But academic women don't have to worry about working conditions. Their problem is hiring and promotion discrimination. And here the ERA may help out. To illustrate further: some academic women advocate a half-time hiring principle. This, they say, would give people more free time to be Human. Now precedent suggests that women workers might be restricted to half-time jobs under such a plan. And part-time female employees could lose the rights which federal legislation on full-time workers safeguards (e.g., sick leave, minimum wage). A half-time job demand hardly serves women who work because they must, and who have trouble finding adequately-paying jobs. This doesn't give an academic woman sleepless nights. Even if she obtained only half-time jobs, one

can manage on \$6000/year or more supplementary income,* and there is something to be said for leisure. Academics identify benefits to them with benefits to all women, whether or not the two conflict.

Academic feminists legitimize their particular demands with general movement principles. They are also certified intellectuals--and they have political power. So they can force the movement to support them politically, without themselves having to return the favor. For whoever fights them appears anti-intellectual and pro-sexist. Take movement feminists' opposition to employment discrimination. An academic woman wants a certain university job, or is up for tenure. "Here's your chance," she tells movement feminists. "Time to put your bodies on the line for our common cause." If they simply don't show, they come off churlish, hypocritical, and irresponsible. Should they demand to evaluate her work first, she accuses them of making intellectual judgements on the basis of political criteria--i.e., of anti-intellectualism. Or suppose they decide to tell her that they object to her particularizing, that they don't want just any woman, they want committed allies. She replies that the big demands come first; the immediate necessity is to get women into the system; afterwards we'll worry about which women we happen to prefer. If they fight her at this level, they seem to oppose better jobs for women. She also may call herself the prototypical committed ally. And if they say that they had something...well, a little more radical in mind, she accuses them of dogmatism and divisiveness. Precisely because she monopolizes the principles, counter-charges of unsisterliness, hypocrisy, irresponsibility, anti-intellectualism, and particularizing rarely stick. She dictates the terms of solidarity;

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* Assuming of course that she has a prosperous husband. The phenomenon of particularizing the general even affects the definition of what benefits academic women. So the needs of academic women with low-paid husbands, and of gay and single academics are ignored. Programs like half-time jobs and nepotism (another academic favorite) benefit only those academics who are heterosexual, married, and prosperous. Very conceivably they could harm everyone else.

movement feminists must either go along or appear to oppose feminism itself. They end up supporting her just because she's female. Thus academic feminists commandeer movement aid.

It is easy for academic feminists to identify their private ends with the gender's needs, their theories with feminism. They possess the structural power to broadcast the equations widely; the movement lacks the resources to object. Now it may be argued that accusing a handful of women of subverting a movement is an unduly conspiratorial view of things. But academic feminists are not a small group of isolated individuals. They are a cohesive group operating in large institutions with access to power. The universities underwrite them. Their numbers may be small, but their structural advantages are great.



CONCLUSION

Academic women command politically useful resources unavailable to non-academic women. This gives them disproportionate power in defining the movement. They are not, however, accountable to the movement. There is a name for such a group: an elite.

Without the existence of a movement which potentially taps massive discontent, the establishment would have no use for female academics. They depend on the movement's existence, but cool it down and get rewarded for doing so. They peddle conservative platitudes as movement analyses. They use the movement's momentum to advance their own goals. There is a word for such behavior: opportunism.

Academic feminists can no longer be allowed to deny the politics of their actions, or to evoke movement forbearance with slogans like "sisterhood" and "unity". Women's Liberation can no longer afford to ignore, under the policy of laissez-faire tolerance, the distribution of power within the movement, and the use to which that power is put in the movement's name. The movement should compare its situation with that of academic feminists, and act accordingly. There is a phrase for this. And the phrase is, "Squash the toadies".

Dear reader,

The authors would like to know your opinion of this paper. No criticism too carping, no praise too effusive. Address correspondence to:

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For some time we had been talking about printing stuff we thought was good even if it didn't lend itself to a twelve page tabloid format. We seriously wanted not to be totally limited to our usual paper size.

"Academic Feminists in the Women's Movement," we think, is a good paper. The analysis it gives is applicable to more than its subject matter and explores the materialist way to interpret people's roles and actions; people play out the roles and do the things their environment demands of them. We don't think there are exceptions to most rules and if there are, who cares. It is a more broad reality of this society -- a reality we detest -- that we are concerned with. Oppression exists everywhere -- exceptions to that rule do not change its reality for those who are oppressed.

People in certain situations will probably act accordingly -- there are reasons to distrust academic women, professional women, women publishing books, etc etc. All the recruits to the Women's Movement who are there like they're attending a photography workshop -- we just don't get the feeling that they need that movement or/and a revolution. We do.

We also thought the paper could be helpful to women considering (or in the middle of) academia or professionalism who think they can be better than what they do.

Besides all this, since we do after all agree with this paper, we got our jollies off on some of the sarcasm and it will be the first thing we actually printed ourselves and that is a skill some of us really wanted to learn.

- the AIAW collective

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